

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., today said that "the essence of today's report to the United Nation's Security Council by Hans Blix of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and Mohamed ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was that while Iraq has been more cooperative on `process' and less cooperative on `substance,' their recommendation is to give inspections more time, to give the inspectors a chance, and give diplomacy an opportunity to bring about a peaceful resolution to the problems in Iraq. There was nothing in today's report that compels a war against Iraq now. President Bush should allow the inspectors to complete their task, and wait on their final report and recommendations before determining our most appropriate course of action.

"We know today what we knew in 1980, that Saddam Hussein is capable of war - we supported him in the decade-long Iran-Iraq war. We know today what we have always known, that he threatens, tortures, and maims his own people - in March of 1988 he killed 5,000 Iraqis in one day. We know today what we always knew, that he is capable of invading another sovereign nation - as he did in Kuwait in 1990. We know today what we have always known, that he is an odious dictator who has had in his possession deadly weapons of mass destruction (WMD), has used WMD, and is seeking even more deadly WMD - chemical, biological and nuclear.

"However, all of this was true and known to us in September when President Bush addressed the United Nations. Nothing has changed, except that Iraq's economy and its military are weaker today than they were in 1991 when we drove his army out of Kuwait.

"So the most important question today is: Since nothing fundamental has changed which threatens our national security, national interests, or points toward an imminent threat from Iraq, Mr. President, why the apparent rush to war now?" Jackson concluded.